

# Buckeye Flyer



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**Building Dedication  
honors one of our own**

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## Commentary

### We have many reasons to be Thankful

By Chaplain Maj. Kenneth Brown  
445th Chaplain

Before long we will be in the midst of the Thanksgiving season. Some will find it more difficult to give thanks this Thanksgiving than in years past as many unit members are separated from their families because of deployment.

On top of this our world has been rocked in recent days by the crumbling of many financial institutions. The breakdown of many large investment banks as well as the unprecedented volatility in the stock market has sent shockwaves throughout not only the United States, but also the world.

The political climate of the day is uncertain as a national election is held to determine the direction of the country the next four years. Citizens on both sides of the political spectrum are anxious of the potential outcome. The effects of these events seems to have shaken our national psyche.

A prophet in ancient Israel named Habakkuk lived in similar times approximately 2500 years ago. He wrote the following words:

Though the fig tree shall not blossom,  
And there be no fruit on the vines,  
Though the yield of the olive should fail,  
And the fields produce no food,  
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no cattle in the stalls,  
Still I will exalt in the LORD I will rejoice in the God of my salvation  
(Habakkuk 3:17-18)

I in no way want to minimize the important economic, political, and social problems which our nation must now address. However, I believe that if we look around we can find much to be thankful for. The United States is still the envy of the world and is blessed abundantly. People immigrate to America, they rarely emigrate. And no other nation in the world is more capable of keeping the world secure. I hope that you will spend a few moments this Thanksgiving to pause, look around, and give thanks to God for His love, kindness, and mercy. We truly have much to be thankful for.

Cover photo: Lt. Col. Chris Clark, 445th Operations Group deputy commander, welcomes Maj. LeRoy Homer's mother, Ilse Homer, to the 445th Airlift Wing for the Operations Building Dedication Ceremony Oct. 4, 2008. (Air Force photo/Ben Strasser)

## Making the Impossible Possible

By Lt. Col. Kenneth Bunting  
445th Maintenance Squadron

As I approach my last days with the 445th Airlift Wing I reflect on all the great people with whom I've had the good fortune to serve with and get to know. The men and women of the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron along with our sister squadron the Maintenance Squadron and the Maintenance Operations Flight are second to none. For they took on and tackled the enormous and problematic C-5A's, greened them up, and made them safe and airworthy aircraft.

While this was being accomplished, there were two operational readiness exercises, and then finally, one Operational Readiness Inspection along the way all with 100 percent mission capability rates—something unheard of in the C-5 world and to my knowledge never matched. The ORI was scheduled a year prior to the ending of the wing's conversion to C-5A's. Yes, that's right; the ORI was one year prior to the ending of conversion—something else unheard of in the C-5 world. Due to the stellar efforts by all, the 445 AW became operational at least a year earlier than had originally been planned.

Then, the 445th Maintenance Group won the Clouse trophy for the best Aircraft Maintenance



Lt. Col. Kenneth Bunting

Group in 4th Air Force and shortly after, the 445th Airlift Wing won the Raincross Trophy. What better accolades for so much hard work from so many stellar folks.

But all this didn't just happen within the maintenance and operations world. It took a concerted and well coordinated effort from everyone within the wing, from the aircrews working hand in hand with the maintainers, to the folks in the mission support group such as civil engineers, aerial porters, the military personal flight, security forces, and the members of the aerospace medicine squadron, and the list goes on and on. Bottom line, everyone in the 445th Airlift Wing contributed much, were critical to any and all successes I've listed above and much, much, more.

Without everyone in the wing pulling together none of this would have happened. That's been the greatest strength I've observed here in the 445th during my short tenure as a member of this wing, and a member of such a stellar group of Airmen who are second to none and who make the impossible, possible each and every day.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with such a fine group of Airmen. I will forever be proud to have been a part of such a great wing and a fantastic group of people. I wish you all the very best and Godspeed. I look forward to watching and hearing of even greater accomplishments in the future from the men and women of the 445th Airlift Wing.

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# Building dedicated to fallen Citizen Airman

By Capt. Caroline Wellman  
445th Public Affairs

The 445th Airlift Wing honored the life and service of one to the unit's former members Oct. 4, 2008, when the wing dedicated its new operations building to LeRoy W. Homer, Jr.

Maj. Homer was part of the 445th Airlift Wing from 1995 to 2000 and died Sept. 11, 2001, while serving as the first officer on United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed near Shanksville, Penn.

The emotion-filled day followed more than two and one-half years of planning and approval, said Lt. Col. Chris Clark, 445th Operations Group deputy commander, who spearheaded the approval process effort and narrated the dedication ceremony.

The ceremony provided those in attendance, which included wing Airmen, local elected officials, and base and community leaders, a hint of Maj. Homer's character and career.

Maj. Homer provided everyone with a "glimpse of the best of the human spirit," Maj. Gen. Duignan, Fourth Air Force commander and former 445th Airlift Wing commander. He called Maj. Homer a "true inspiration" who "never quit on America."

"Dressed in his United Airlines uniform, he led America into battle (Sept. 11, 2001)," Maj. Gen. Duignan said.

Col. Stephen Goeman, 445th Airlift Wing commander, echoed the repeated theme – that Maj. Homer was a real hero.

Maj. Homer was the kind of person a commander wants in his unit, the colonel said, emphasizing that Maj. Homer's legacy should not be defined only by his actions on Sept. 11, 2001, but also by the years of service the major gave to his country as an Airman.

"We are proud to honor one of our own," Col. Goeman said.

Throughout the event, people who knew Maj. Homer readily swapped stories with one another, but everyone agreed that Maj. Homer was a humble hard-worker who always made the person he was



**Mrs. Melodie Homer cuts the ceremonial ribbon during the Operations Building dedication Oct. 4, 2008, at the 445th Airlift Wing. Overlooking the ribbon cutting are Col. (ret.) Robert Shondel; Col. Roger Gallet, 445th Operations Group commander, Maj. Gen. Robert E. Duignan, Fourth Air Force commander; Major Homer's mother, Ms. Ilse Homer; Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner, Air Force Reserve Command commander; Col. Stephen Goeman, 445th Airlift Wing commander; Lt. Col. Chris Clark, 445th Operation Group deputy commander; Major and Mrs. Homer's children, Laurel and Alden; and niece and nephew Amaree and Tahmalo Thorpe. (Air Force photo/Ben Strasser)**

talking to feel like the most important person in the world.

He earned his private pilot's license when he was 16, working 35 hours per week at night to pay for flying lessons. A few years later he received a presidential nomination to West Point, but chose instead to go to the Air Force Academy because he wanted to fly airplanes, not helicopters, Maj. Homer's mother Ilse Homer said.

He loved to fly and he loved his job, Mrs. Homer said of her late husband, indicating he would be honored to have a building named for him, but would probably also feel the honor was undeserved.

Mrs. Homer also thanked the Wright-Patterson AFB community for recognizing her husband's sacrifice and for providing one more way to ensure that his legacy will not be forgotten.

In addition to Maj. Gen. Duignan, Col. Goeman and Mrs. Homer, the event featured remarks from retired Col. Robert Shondel, former 445th Airlift Wing vice commander, a C-5 Galaxy flyover by the 89th Airlift Squadron here, an F-16 Fighting Falcon flyover by the 162nd Fighter Squadron from the Ohio Air National Guard Base in Springfield, and an official ribbon cutting.



# Food, Fun, and Family

## Wing members enjoy annual picnic



Above: Lt. Col. Jennifer Wedel, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, watches her son Tyler on an All Terrain Vehicle display. (Air Force photos/Senior Airman Ken LaRock)  
Right: Senior Master Sgt. Craig Davidson, 445th Maintenance Squadron, and Master Sgt. Angela Stein, 445th Maintenance Operations Flight, enjoy one of the many games available at the annual wing picnic.



Above: Master Sgt. Robb Fulker, 445th Security Forces Squadron, performs a weapons demonstration for wing and family members during the 445th Airlift Wing's annual picnic. (Air Force photo/Senior Airman Amanda Duncan)  
Left: Reservists and family members go through the food line during the wing picnic. (Air Force photo/Capt. Caroline Wellman)





Right: Tech. Sgt. Mike Heaton, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, and Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Drain, 445th Maintenance Group, work at the grill during the 445th Airlift Wing's annual picnic. The picnic was open to all wing members, their families and friends, and was sponsored by the Chiefs' Group. (Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ken LaRock)

Below right: Staff Sgt. Michael Benzing, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, enjoys spending time with his son, Nathan, during the picnic. (Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ken LaRock)



Above: Staff Sgt. Tame Marshall, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, paints Gabriel Linn's face. Gabriel is the son of Maj. Robert Linn, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron. (Air Force photo/Capt. Caroline Wellman)

Bottom right: Retired Chief Master Sgt. Ray Combs and his wife, Pat, dress as clowns to entertain guests at the wing picnic. (Air Force photo/Senior Airman Ken LaRock)





# Reservist thanks wing following motorcycle accident

By Capt. Caroline Wellman  
445th Public Affairs

Almost six months to the day after his motorcycle accident, Tech. Sgt. Russell Atkinson, an Air Reserve Technician in the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, made his return to the 445th Airlift Wing when he mingled among unit Airmen at the wing picnic Oct. 5.

Although still on extended leave, he and his wife, Lynette, came to the base from Troy to see friends and co-workers and to thank the wing for the outpouring of support they have had since the April 6 accident.

"(The wing) says they take care of their own," Sergeant Atkinson said, "and they do what they say."

Mrs. Atkinson echoed her husband's sentiment.

"We've always heard (commanders) here say, 'If you're here, you're family,'" she said. "The 445th has proved that over and over again."

Sergeant Atkinson does not remember the motorcycle accident or the three weeks following it, which he split between the intensive care unit and the step-down unit, Mrs. Atkinson said. His first memory after the accident is of being taken from the step-down unit to the rehabilitation floor.

Still, Sergeant Atkinson said, that apparently did not stop his co-workers and commanders from visiting him in the hospital, even when he was unconscious.

The wing has been nothing but supportive, the Atkinsons said, during the past six months.

"Anything I've needed," Mrs. Atkinson said, "from having the air conditioner put in the window to having the car taken for an oil change – anything I have needed, all I've had to do is ask."

Sergeant Atkinson admits he used to look

forward to Friday, but now realizes how good he had it.

"The way people have reached out to me is incredible. It's precious," he said. "We've got good people here and I miss them. We're very fortunate to have this unit. We're good at what we do and now I know why."

Friends from all over the wing stopped by the Atkinsons' table at the picnic to express how happy they were to see Sergeant Atkinson, who assured them all that progress was slow, but he was "getting there" and that he cannot wait to be back.

Master Sgt. Jeffrey Hurtt, 445th Aircraft Maintenance

Squadron, assured the sergeant, who still has a healthy sense of humor, not to worry about a thing, that they had "lots of work lined up when you get back."

Although he cannot remember everyone who has expressed support for him or his family, Sergeant Atkinson would like to thank Chief Aaron Mouser, Senior Master Sgt. Mike Brimmer, Col. Anna Schulte, Lt. Col. Kenneth Bunting, Senior Master Sgts. Nate Wilson and Mark Donahue, and anyone who donated leave, for all they have done for him and his family.



Tech. Sgt. Russell Atkinson, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, with his wife Lynette, at the wing picnic. (Air Force photo/Capt. Caroline Wellman)

## Wing members speak at deployed teacher's elementary school



Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Charlie Miller

Staff Sgt. Stephen Ingram, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron, was a guest speaker in Ms. Ava Collucci's fourth grade class at Madison Park Elementary School, Trotwood, Ohio, Sept. 11. Sergeant Ingram, along with Tech. Sgt. Charlie Miller, 445th Public Affairs, spoke to a total of about 100 fourth graders at the school that day.

Ms. Collucci is a co-worker of Master Sgt. Kemberlee Scott, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron, who recently deployed. Ms. Collucci said that, as a teacher, Sgt. Scott probably misses being at school. "The children should know that one of the teachers is sacrificing for them and they should show appreciation and say thanks. There is nothing like getting a letter or picture from a child when you are a teacher. We really wanted to touch her somehow."



## Awards

*Congratulations to the following 445 AW members who recently earned an award.*

### Meritorious Service Medal

Lt Col Louise Harnish-Main, 445 AES

Lt Col Brian Klink, 445 CES  
SMSgt Robert Andrews, 87 APS

### Air Force Commendation Medal

Capt Cynthia Middleton, 445 ASTS

TSgt Chad Moystner, 445 AMXS  
TSgt Amy Zaenkert, 445 MOF  
SSgt Charlotte Branham, 445 MSF

### Air Force Achievement Medal

Capt Nancie Foster, 445 ASTS  
MSgt Judy Hunt, 445 MXG  
TSgt Alan Bortz, 445 AMXS  
TSgt Chad Cazan, 87 APS  
TSgt Paul Errett, 87 APS  
TSgt Eugene Mullen, Jr., 445 AMXS  
TSgt Sean Schluter, 87 APS  
TSgt Stoni Warwick, 445 MOF  
SSgt Gregory Justice, 445 MXS  
SrA Adam Wyse, 87 APS

## Newcomers

*Welcome to the following reservists, recently assigned to the 445 AW:*

Maj Joseph Thompson, 445 AMDS  
SMSgt Gregory McWhorter, 445 CES  
TSgt Lessa Nicara Givens, 445 AW  
TSgt Linda Sue Thrasher, 87 APS  
SSgt David Alexander, 445 MXS  
SSgt Jessica Boone, 445 AW  
SSgt Bradley Gibson, 445 AMXS  
SSgt Patrick Hansford, 89 AS  
SSgt Gregory Joseph, 445 CF  
SSgt Nathan McClanahan, 445 MXS  
SSgt Aaron Skapik, 445 SFS  
SSgt Elmer Querbin, 445 AMDS  
SSgt Ryan Ward, 445 SFS  
SrA Sabrena Holmberg, 445 AMDS  
SrA Nichole Huck, 445 ASTS

SrA Donald Newman, 445 MXS  
SrA Ron Robertson, 445 LRS  
SrA Justin Staten, 445 MXS  
A1C Ann Northrup, 445 MXS  
Amn Dawn Gettys, 445 SFS  
AB Natasskia Gerald, 445 SVS  
AB Ianto Hill, 445 LRS

## Promotions

*Congratulations to the following reservists recently promoted to the rank indicated.*



### Airman First Class

Erika Algeo, 445 AES  
Jessica Davis, 445 ASTS  
Jacob McCorkle, 445 AES  
Andrew Protsman, 445 AES



### Senior Airman

Christopher Booth, 445 SFS  
Brandon Grajeda, 445 ASTS  
Russ Hernandez, 87 APS  
Michael Pitts, 445 MXS  
Jonathan Teruel, 445 MXS



### Staff Sergeant

Amanda Bush, 445 AES  
Joel Ford, 445 AES  
Korey Jones, 445 CES  
James Kirk, 445 ASTS  
Joseph Rychnovsky, 445 CES



### Technical Sergeant

William Castle, 87 APS  
Chad Kopf, 445 AMXS  
Paul Schrenk, 445 MXS



### Master Sergeant

Tracy Boorum, 445 SVF  
Sean Schluter, 87 APS



### Senior Master Sergeant

Cornell Billingsley, 445 MOF  
Sandra Sherer, 445 ASTS  
Cass Tumblison, 445 OSS



### Chief Master Sergeant

John Dornon, 445 MXG  
Nathan Wilson, 445 AMXS  
Michael Wroten, 445 AMXS



### Major

Trevor Sthultz, 445 MXS

## News Briefs

### Commander's Call

Commander's Call will be held Nov. 2 and Nov. 9 at the Base Theater at 7:30 a.m.



### Thanksgiving Baskets

The wing will be providing Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. If you know of a family in need, please contact your First Sergeant.



### Veteran's Day

Nov. 11



Happy Thanksgiving!  
Nov. 27





# Operation Hurrivac

By Laura Darden  
445th Public Affairs

In the middle of a Health Services Inspection, three crews from the 445th Airlift Wing Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron were activated for Operation Hurrivac, evacuation support for Hurricane Gustav.

A flight crew consists of two flight nurses and three aeromedical technicians. A total of 15 AES members were part of the operation. The crew deployed only five hours after being activated.

After completing their Hurricane Gustav mission, the crews were required to stand by since hurricanes Hanna and Ike were anticipated to make landfall shortly after Gustav. The crews worked out of Little Rock AFB, and were gone a total of 18 days.

The 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron was an integral part of the safe movement of more than 400 people. Most patients were from local nursing homes and hospitals, including some patients on motorized wheel chairs.

Even though the mission was a short notice activation and lasted longer than anyone expected, the AES members were dedicated to the mission and very positive about their role in the humanitarian support.

"I was proud, prepared and ready to serve in a time like this," Maj. Kimberly Sandusky, 445 AES flight nurse said. "My crew along with the other medical crew directors couldn't have asked for better, more prepared or dedicated crew members."

Maj. Sandusky's words ring true as the outcome of the Health Services Inspection that was going on during the activation of Operation Hurrivac was an Outstanding for the squadron. Well done, AES!



Above: Maj. Kimberly Sandusky, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, prepares a C-130 aircraft to transport patients out of the path of Hurricane Gustav. (Courtesy photos)



Aeromedical evacuation personnel begin loading patients onto aircraft.



Patients on motorized wheelchairs are airlifted from hurricane areas. The 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron provided support during two hurricanes and was an integral part of the safe movement of more than 400 people.

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